



**Los Angeles County
Commission on Disabilities**
Celebrating 33 Years of Leadership & Advocacy
www.laccod.org



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Kecia B. Weller
President

Janet A. Neal
1st Vice President

John B. Troost
2nd Vice President

Bernard Siegel
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Wan Chun Chang
Michael G. Gureckas
Maria Mustelier-Parrish
Alexia Teran
Harley D. Rubenstein
Wendy L. Welt
Sheila D. Wright

**MINUTES OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**

The regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities was held on Wednesday, March 18, 2009, in Room 140 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Kecia B. Weller at 1:05 p.m. Roll call was taken by Ms. Rosemary Osuna, Commission Staff. The following Commissioners were present at the meeting: President Kecia B. Weller, 1st Vice President Janet A. Neal, 2nd Vice President John B. Troost, Commissioners Maria Mustelier-Parrish, and Harley D. Rubenstein. Treasurer Bernard Siegel, Commissioners Michael G. Gureckas, Alexia Teran, Wendy L. Welt and Wan Chun Chang were not present.

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 18, 2009 MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Mustelier-Parrish, seconded by 2nd Vice President Troost, and unanimously carried, the minutes for the meeting of February 18, 2009, were approved with the following correction:

Page 7, under ADJOURNMENT

On motion of 1st Vice President Neal, seconded by Commissioner Gureckas and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m., in memory of Culver City Police Officer, Sergeant Curtis Massey and Ms. Vicky France Frantz.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Teddie-Joy Remhild, Consultant for the California Health Incentives Improvement Project (CHIIP), provided public comment and reported on the 250 % Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program. Ms. Remhild added that she will be conducting training workshops on the 250% Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program. These workshops are open to individuals with disabilities and professionals who work with people with disabilities. Training workshops are scheduled for April 22, 2009, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Verdugo One Stop Job Center, located at 1255 S. Central Ave., Glendale, CA, and on June 25, 2009, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Westside Center for Independent Living, located at 12901 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. Ms. Remhild provided the following documents: 1) CHIIP publication No. 2 (502008) English, and 2) 250% Working Disabled Medi-Cal Program flyer.

(Commissioners Alexia Teran and Michael G. Gureckas joined the meeting.)

Daniel Garcia provided public comment and reported that, last year, an autistic child was shot by the police in Hawthorne, CA. He added that he is currently providing training at the West Los Angeles Independent Living Center to assist individuals dealing with incidents involving people with disabilities.

Linda Block provided public comment and encouraged individuals to contact their state senators and assembly, and to vote against SB41 and AB60.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Weller reported that Commission Services Staff member, Ms. Rosemary Osuna was promoted to another position. The Commission congratulated Ms. Osuna, and presented her a "*Certificate of Appreciation*" for her dedication and commitment provided to the Commission on Disabilities.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Rosemary Osuna reported that the City of Los Angeles Commission on Disability requested the LA County Commission on Disabilities to partner with their Commission to disseminate information on the City of Los Angeles Commission on Disability's regular meeting scheduled for April 1, 2009.

The meeting will be held at the Los Angeles City Hall – Board of Public Works (Room 350), from 1-4 p.m. Issues of critical concern to the disability community will be discussed. Presenters' topics will include: education, transportation, low-income housing, mental health services, Medicare and healthcare, HIV/AIDS, and employment. The City of Los Angeles Commission on Disability encourages attendance to this meeting. Ms. Osuna added that information on this meeting has been posted on the LA County Commission on Disabilities' web site, www.laccod.org.

PRESENTATION ON THE ABUSE OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Mr. Michael Gargiulo, Deputy In Charge of the Elder Abuse and Dependent Care Section of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) reported on methods used by LADA in addressing cases of abuse of individuals with developmental disabilities, and added the following:

- The Elder Abuse and Dependent Care Section prosecutes these cases, countywide.
- These cases are some of the most difficult to prosecute, as they require maximum amount of patience and sensitivity in bringing them into the courts and the criminal justice process.
- Most cases of this nature take a tremendous amount of groundwork, at the onset of filing, because of the difficulties associated with interviewing the victims with developmental disabilities.
- Unfortunately, contrary to the goal of LADA, the outcome of these of cases is typically an unsuccessful prosecution.
- Although LADA keeps statistical records of all cases handled, LADA does not currently keep records of cases involving individuals with developmental disabilities or statistical information on victorious prosecutions.
- LADA's intervention in a case happens only after law enforcement has done an investigation. Subsequently, law enforcement directs the case to the next level.

(Commissioner Wan Chun Chang joined the meeting.)

Ms. Monica Nesith, Victims Service Representative, for the Los Angeles County Victim-Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), LADA, reported the following:

- The Victim-Witness Assistance Program's mission is to alleviate the trauma and devastating effects of crime on the lives of victims and their families. VWAP assists prosecutors and victims who are going through the criminal justice process -- from the onset of a crime to the criminal court proceeding.
- Victim advocates guide victims through the court process, help victims receive restitution, provide crisis intervention, and provide referrals to counseling and community services.
- VWAP also offers training and education to other agencies and the public in general.

Ms. Nesith distributed a document titled, "Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Victim-Witness Assistance Program," two brochures, "Crime Prevention Tips for People with Disabilities" and "Identity Theft – A Growing Concern," and a business card for the Los Angeles County Victim-Witness Assistance Program with contact numbers.

Commissioner Gureckas thanked Deputy Gargiulo and Ms. Nesith for their informative report.

Detective Daniel Zumer, Hate Crime Task Force of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) reported that since 2005, the Hate Crime Task Force and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) work in collaboration. Detective Zumer and another investigator are assigned to this task force; they both have over 20 years of experience, and have investigated over 500 cases, mostly gang-related, resulting in a considerable level of experience involving the prosecution of hate crimes.

He also added the following:

- Because the individuals with disabilities group falls under the purview of a protected group, any crime associated with individuals with disabilities is considered a hate crime.

- The State and Federal Law have two descriptions of the legal elements which constitute a hate crime. Under State law, a hate is a crime against a person motivated substantially by a person's race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, or disability (physical or mental). In Federal law, in order to qualify a crime as a hate crime, a crime has to be a threat or use of force committed against a person based on race, ethnicity, religion, and/or disability, and the crime has to have happened while the victim is participating in a federally protected activity.
- Statistical reporting to the Department of Justice is submitted monthly by LASD. Reports from the Hate Crime Task Force are submitted on the 15th of every month. The Los Angeles County Human Relations Department uses LASD's statistic to prepare its annual report. The Hate Crime Task force is uncertain on statistical information involving crimes against individuals with disabilities. They, however, attribute their uncertainty to the underreporting of these types of crimes. Since 2004, only two crimes against individuals with disabilities have been reported to LASD.

After a question and answer forum by the Commission, President Weller thanked Detective Zumer for his presentation.

After discussion, Commissioner Gureckas thanked and commended the presenters for the valuable information presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

President Weller reported that the Committee met today and discussed the Commissioner's retreat. The Commission agreed to have a retreat in San Pedro, CA. Topics of discussion at the Commissioner's retreat will include amending the Commission's Bylaws.

Public Relations Committee

Disability Network Radio Program KTYM 1460 AM

1st Vice President Neal reported that she is still working on captioning the "Disability Network" radio program hosted by the Commission on KTYM 1460 AM. She further added that she had invited the OuttaSight Trio to perform on the Commission's radio program in July.

Events Committee

Access Awards Luncheon

1st Vice President Neal reported that the Events Committee meets monthly, usually on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. Commissioners Weller, Rubenstein, Siegel and Neal are a part of this Committee. She invited more Commissioners to participate in this meeting. 1st Vice President Neal added that unfortunately, there was no quorum at the last meeting held on March 11, 2009, and therefore, would not be able to submit a Committee recommendation. However, 1st Vice President Neal made a recommendation that the 18th Annual Access Awards Luncheon be held on Monday, October 19, 2009, and that the theme of the luncheon be "Disabled Does Not Mean Unable." She noted that staff was researching this slogan to avoid copyright issues.

After discussion, on motion of 1st Vice Chair Neal, seconded by Commissioner Teran, and unanimously carried, the Commission approved to hold the 18th Annual Access Awards Luncheon on October 19, 2009.

Bill Tainter Scholarship Program

1st Vice President Neal reported that because of the lack of a quorum at the Event's Committee meeting, a recommendation for the Commission could not be given. She, however, made a recommendation that: 1) the Commission meet and interview with the Bill Tainter Scholarship candidates, 2) have the Bill Tainter Scholarship Presentation by the Board of Supervisors in June or July, 3) change the process by which the grant funds are distributed to the scholarship winners, and disburse scholarship funds to winners upon the Commission's receipt of transcripts from students for the first semester of higher education.

Therefore, on motion of 1st Vice President Neal, seconded by Commissioner Teran, and unanimously carried, the Commission approved to: 1) meet and interview the Bill Tainter Scholarship candidates, 2) have the Bill Tainter Scholarship presentation by the Board of Supervisors in June or July, and 3) change the process by which the scholarship grant funds are distributed to the scholarship winners, and disburse funds upon the Commission's receipt of the transcripts from students for the first semester of higher education.

Community Services Committee

There was none.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

ASI Report

There was none.

MTA Report

There was none.

REPORT BY GORDON ANTHONY, SENIOR DEPUTY COMPLIANCE OFFICER

There was none.

ITEMS NOT ON THE POSTED AGENDA TO BE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA

1st Vice President Neal and Commissioner Teran requested that the Commission invite the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles Police Department to provide a report on abuse of individuals under the age of 18 with developmental disabilities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1st Vice President Neal announced that she will be a speaker at the Los Angeles City Commission on Disability on April 1, 2009. She encourages people with disabilities to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of 1st Vice President Neal, seconded by Commissioner Teran, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Kecia Weller, President
Janet A. Neal, 1st Vice President
John B. Troost, 2nd Vice President
Wan Chun Chang
Michael Gureckas
Maria Mustelier-Parrish
Harley Rubenstein
Alexia Teran
Sheila Wright

Guests

Michael Gargiulo, Deputy In Charge of the
Elder Abuse and Dependent Care Section,
LA County District Attorney's Office
Detective Daniel Zumer, LA County
Sheriff's Department
Lynne-Ann McGrail, LifeSigns, Inc.
Jonathan Gleicher, LifeSigns, Inc.
Jane Goodman, Total Recall
Daniel Garcia, Eastern Los Angeles
Regional Center
Jesse Padilla, Eastern Los Angeles
Regional Center
Teddie-Joy Remhild, Consultant, CHIIP
Linda Block

Excused Absence

Bernard Siegel, Treasurer

Unexcused Absence

Wendy L. Welt

Board of Supervisors

Rosemary Osuna, Staff
Martha Arana, Staff
Audra Galang, Staff